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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE AMERICAN  
AND JAPANESE DELEGATIONS, OCTOBER 29, 1934, AT  
CLARIDGE'S

Present:

For the United States:

Mr. Davis  
Admiral Standley  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Atherton  
Mr. Dooman  
Commander Schuirmann  
Mr. Field

For Japan:

Mr. Matsudaira  
Admiral Yamamoto  
Captain Iwashita  
Mr. Mizota  
Mr. Kato

Mr. Matsudaira began by asking what should be discussed. Mr. Davis said that he supposed there was nothing much to be discussed since the Japanese had told us they had largely covered their position in the previous talk. He had a few questions, however, which he desired to ask for clarification. He desired to know for instance whether the common upper limit proposed by Japan would be the same also for France and Italy. Admiral Yamamoto replied that France and Italy should have the right to build up to the same limit although if they desired to come to some other arrangement as between themselves they should be free to do so since they are far removed from Japan and the United States. When Mr. Davis pointed to the proximity of Great Britain, the Admiral said Japan would have no objection to Great Britain also making special arrangements with France and Italy. Mr. Matsudaira emphasized that since Japan insisted on the principle of equality, she had no right to prevent others from claiming this also.

Mr. Matsudaira told the American Delegation that at the last meeting between the Japanese and British Delegations they had continued to talk about general principles. The British had asked questions to which the Japanese had replied. They had subsequently had talks between Admiral Yamamoto and his experts and the First Sea

Lord and his experts. Mr. Davis wondered whether the Japanese were prepared to give us the information they had given the British in their technical meetings. Mr. Matsudaira said that they were ready to do so but felt it would be better at a separate meeting. Admiral Yamamoto, on the other hand, said that while he would welcome an exchange of ideas on both sides, he could not see to what extent a discussion of details would contribute to a solution of fundamental questions. The most important part of their plan was the fundamental policy embodied therein and the details were intimately connected with this policy. Admiral Yamamoto stated that they had discussed technical details with the British only on the understanding that the latter had agreed to the basic principles of the Japanese proposal. Upon being questioned on this point, Mr. Matsudaira said we had misunderstood and that in the technical discussions with the British they had presented their technical views on the assumption of ultimate acceptance of the principles of their plan. Should these principles be rejected, the technical views - for instance, those relating to qualitative limitations - would have to be modified. "I look upon technical questions as of secondary importance. The question of policy and principles is of primary importance. While we are willing to proceed to our talk on technical questions, we look upon the question of the common upper limit as of paramount importance, so that we cannot consider the discussions of qualitative limitation, such as unit size, as being final unless a decision can be reached to fix a common upper limit." In response to the questions from Mr. Davis, Admiral Yamamoto clarified his position by stating that, "The discussion of details does not prejudice the attitude on general principles..... Because the principle of the common upper limit is looked upon as the most important feature by the Japanese Navy, we considered our position on other questions might have to be modified if the common upper limit is not accepted." Mr. Davis stated that there was no disagreement as to this point; neither side would commit itself in these technical discussions. It was simply a matter of a further elucidation and clarification of the Japanese position in order that we might give them a full and fair consideration. The United States, Mr. Davis explained, had no detailed technical proposals to advance. We were in favor of maintaining and continuing the two treaties except that we would advocate reductions and, if they were acceptable, we would be willing to discuss with an open mind the technical details of how to carry out this general program. Thus if there were an agreement for a 20% reduction, it would be a problem for our experts to examine how to carry it out in the various categories, but there was no use of our going into details of this sort unless there were agreement on general principles.

Admiral Yamamoto here objected that if only the Japanese were to explain their technical views, it would not be very useful to have

a meeting of experts. Mr. Davis asked whether the British had given the Japanese their technical views, to which Mr. Matsudaira replied, "Oh, yes, clearly." The Japanese insisted that the last meeting with the British had consisted largely of a presentation of the detailed program of the British. Mr. Matsudaira continued, "We are not particularly anxious to have these technical matters, but we thought you might have some views to present just as in the case of the British." Admiral Yamamoto, in further explanation of his position regarding technical discussions, repeated that the Japanese attitude on technical matters was very immediately related to the fundamental spirit of their proposals; to illustrate, they were advocating the abolition of aircraft carriers; if they had aggressive designs in the Far East, nothing would be more useful than the retention of aircraft carriers. Similarly, if they intended aggression, they would favor abolition of submarines since they are useful only for defense of their home waters. "I consider that the real aim of our proposal goes beyond the setting of a common upper limit. I look upon the spirit of our proposal as being to reduce the menace of war and to make it more difficult to wage war. In technical discussions, on the other hand, we consider the problem of how to carry on war most advantageously, which is the opposite of the purpose of our discussions." Mr. Davis was in hearty accord with the idea of removing the incentive of fighting. He said that our idea had always been to give each of the three principal Powers equality of security and to remove the cause for their going to war against each other.

Mr. Davis then inquired whether the American views were so very different from those of the British, to which Mr. Matsudaira replied that the Japanese did not know exactly what the British thought of the Japanese program. At this point he emphatically declared that it was the Japanese intention to denounce the Washington Treaty before the end of the year and then to try to find some basis for an agreement satisfactory to all.

In reply to Mr. Matsudaira's question as to what we would discuss with the British in the afternoon, Mr. Davis explained that this would be our first meeting since last July and that we had no definite agenda. We had not come to London with any plan for an entirely new agreement on a new basis, but merely with the idea of continuing the Treaties or of concluding a new one which would continue the purposes of the Washington and London Treaties. Mr. Matsudaira here injected that we had surely given the British our detailed program last summer, since we had had technical discussions at that time. Mr. Davis stated that the British had given to us their views on technical questions but that we did not present our technical

views since we did not have any to present. Our program then as now had simply been for a 20% reduction, the details to be worked out later.

The two delegations then continued to consider the possibility of technical discussions. Mr. Davis advanced the suggestion that Admiral Standley and Admiral Yamamoto sit down together and talk the matter over in detail. He explained that while he did not believe that there was any opportunity to try to reach an agreement on technical questions, his idea was merely to enable Admiral Standley to obtain a clear understanding of what the Japanese proposals meant in practice. Mr. Matsudaira, speaking in Japanese to Mr. Dooman, stated that they did not have any hard and fast technical program. Their idea was that as the conversations went forward the technical problems on both sides would develop in such a manner as to make it possible to bring the opposing technical views closer together and to reconcile them.

After further discussions it was agreed that no decision should now be reached on the matter of a technical meeting, but that there would be another informal meeting between the two delegations at which the question could be dealt with. Mr. Davis said that the American Delegation would like to pay a return visit on the Japanese and would do so sometime after the meeting scheduled for the afternoon with the British.

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